US Army Corps of Engineers
Baltimore District

The Corps'pondent

A newsletter by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for Spring Valley Project area residents

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The Corps' mission in Spring Valley is to identify, investigate and remove or remediate threats to human health, safety or the environment resulting from past Department of Defense activities in the area.

Munitions destruction scheduled for May

by Todd Beckwith
Spring Valley Project Manager

In anticipation of the munitions recovery efforts coming to a close in March, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is planning to safely destroy all of the chemical munitions recovered at the Pit 3 project area. This involves safely treating and neutralizing the chemical agent fill from the recovered World War I military chemical munitions. USACE plans to use a mobile system, known as the Explosive Destruction System to destroy the munitions on federal property at a site adjacent to our storage facility in the May 2009 timeframe.

USACE is coordinating its destruction plans with the Environmental Protection Agency, the D.C. Department of the Environment, and the Department of Defense Explosives Safety Board. USACE will receive approval of the plans by these agencies prior to beginning the destruction operations.

USACE presented its destruction plans to the Spring Valley Restoration Advisory Board at the board's Feb. 10 meeting. USACE also plans to provide details of the plan during a community meeting scheduled for March 10 at the Horace Mann Elementary School at 7 p.m., in northwest Washington.

The Army used the EDS system at Spring Valley in 2003 to safely destroy 15 chemical munitions. The EDS system was designed by the Army to provide on-site treatment of chemical munitions in a safe and environmentally sound manner. The EDS system has been approved for use in the field by the Army and the DDESB and has been used at many locations across the country to safely destroy recovered chemical munitions.

The EDS's stainless steel containment vessel contains all the blast, vapor and fragments from the munition, preventing any release of contaiminants to the environment. (courtesy photo)

The EDS treatment process involves a number of steps to destroy the recovered chemical munitions. First, a commercial explosive is placed on the munition and it is then put inside the EDS's 50 gallon stainless steel containment vessel. The vessel is sealed and the explosives are remotely detonated. This opens the outer casing of the munition. The containment vessel prevents the release of metal fragments and chemical agent into the environment.

Next, neutralizing chemicals are pumped into the containment vessel, which react with the chemical agent in the munition to form a less toxic substance. Heaters within the containment vessel are turned on and the hydraulic oscillation subsystem mixes the reacting chemicals to ensure complete neutralization. The resulting liquid is drained into drums and trucked to a permitted facility for disposal. Trucking procedures will follow appropriate Department of Transportation regulations and local D.C. government transportation guidelines.

After detonation, the air inside the containment vessel is filtered using a carbon filter before being released into the environment.

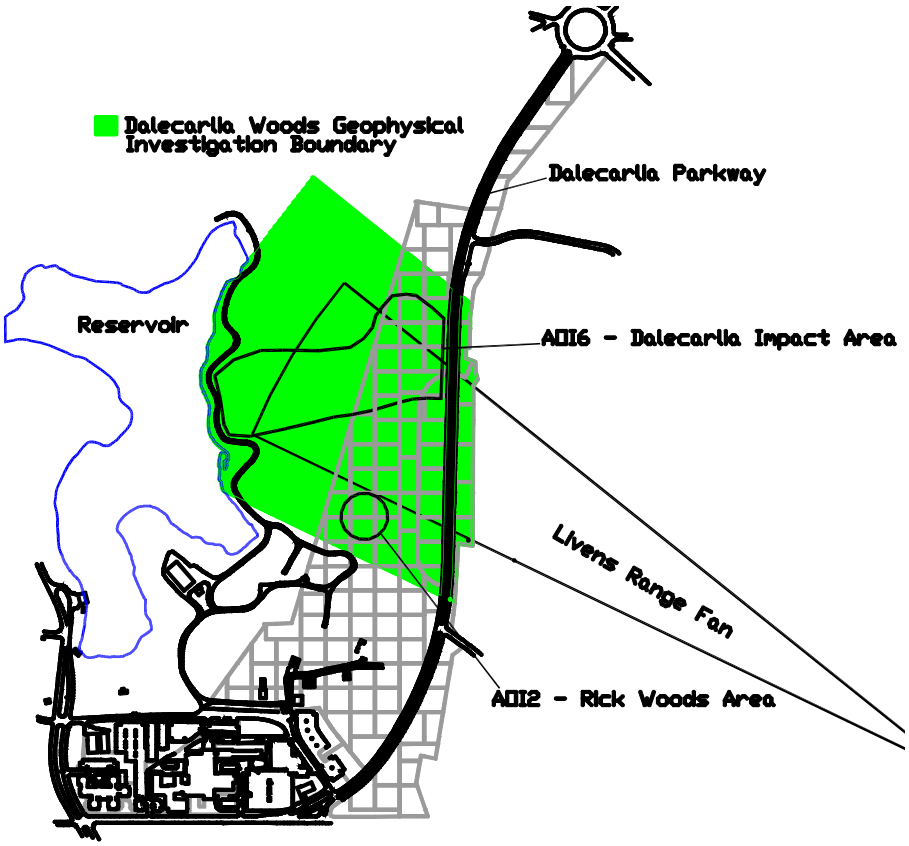
Both the EDS's containment vessel and fragment suppression system are mounted on the bed of a small flat trailer that is transported to sites where recovered chemical munitions are stored. As an added measure of safety during the use of the EDS, the Army will erect a vapor containment structure over the EDS.

As with the EDS, the vapor containment structure contains a filtering system designed to prevent the release of a chemical agent should an unplanned release occur during the handling of the munitions. Officials stress that the onsite use of the EDS significantly reduces the risks associated with long term storage, or the handling and long distance transportation of chemical filled munitions.

Dalecarlia Woods geophysical investigation

by Lan Reeser
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its Spring Valley project partners — D.C. Department of the Environment and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region III — plan to begin a geophysical investigation of the Dalecarlia Woods this spring. The purpose of this investigation is to search the area for munitions-related items and, if found, to properly remove and dispose of them.



An area approximately 62 acres in size has been identified for this investigation. The area was selected based on the findings of a previous 1994 investigation and the suspected location of several historical features known as Area of Interest (AOI) 2 — Rick Woods Area, Area of Interest 6 — Dalecarlia Impact Area, and the Livens range fan. The extent of the investigation will encompass these features and include additional buffer zones to the north, south, east and west.

In 1994, USACE conducted a geophysical survey of about 14 acres in the Federal Woods area, which is located on the west side of the Dalecarlia Parkway. There, 370 metallic anomalies were identified that required further investigation. When those items were dug, the investigation revealed one partially filled Livens smoke round that did not pose an explosive hazard, four munitions debris items, four possible munitions-related fragments, and cultural debris consisting of nails, tin cans, barbed wire, railroad spikes, barrel pieces, a horse shoe, rebar and bricks. The results of the 1994 investigation, at that time, were determined to not warrant further investigation.

With the identification of the Livens range fan and Areas of Interest, USACE and its partners determined that the Dalecarlia Woods area required further investigation. Because it was determined that surveying the remaining residential properties in the Spring Valley neighborhood was a higher priority, funding for the Dalecarlia Woods was requested after funding was in place to survey the residential properties.

Surveying of the residential properties is expected to be complete this fall. USACE is scheduled to begin the expanded investigation of the Dalecarlia Woods area this spring.

The USACE geophysical survey contractor, Earth Resources Technology, Inc, will perform an initial surface sweep of the area to identify and clear metallic objects from the ground surface. The purpose of the surface clearance is to remove objects that could mask the identification of deeper subsurface anomalies.

The surface sweep will be followed later this spring and summer with a digital geophysical mapping of the area. The digital data will then get processed and reviewed to identify and select the list of anomalies to be intrusively investigated. Actual digging is expected to take place in late 2009 to early 2010.

Project Updates: Pit 3, PSB, arsenic removal

by Joyce Conant
Public Affairs

Work continues at Pit 3 and the American University Public Safety building (PSB).

With the start of the new year, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its contractors are continuing work in the Glenbrook Road area of Spring Valley, digging for and removing debris left behind by the Army in World War I.

At Pit 3, located in the 4800 block of Glenbrook Road, workers have begun what the USACE hopes will be the final effort requiring digging activities to occur inside of the metal protective structure at the site. Work restarted on Jan. 12, and is expected to be finished by the late February to mid-March timeframe.

Once completed, the structure is expected to be removed, and the remaining areas requiring investigation will be accomplished in an open air environment.

The current plan is to have the work at Pit 3 completed by this summer.

At American University's Public Safety Building, crews have carefully excavated and completed 22 planned investigative trenches. Now that trenching is complete, contractors will excavate two large triangular areas behind the building to search for additional buried material.

When done with this portion, workers will remove some additional soil in front of the building. This will complete all digging activities surrounding the PSB, and then the effort that began in June 2008 will be finished.

Project personnel understand the difficulties experienced by residents during the last several months as these two work sites have been active.

"The effort has been worthwhile, with the recovery of a large amount of debris, and in the case of Pit 3, the recovery of a number of military munitions," said Dan Noble, project manager.

"Safety remains the top priority, and we are in constant communication with our regulatory partners and the community as the work proceeds."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers expects to achieve a major milestone in 2009 — the completion of arsenic contaminated soil removal from residential properties that has been underway since 2003. The effort began as a time critical removal action to address very high levels of contamination; and more recently, a non-time critical removal action that has removed 17,900 tons of contaminated soil from the neighborhood.

As the project nears completion, USACE is facing the prospect of what to do in situations where property owners have either not allowed sampling for arsenic to be conducted or who have declined to have arsenic contaminated soil removed after testing showed levels greater than the cleanup goals.

There are approximately 25 owners who have not allowed testing and five owners who have declined cleanup after allowing testing.

"Ideally we would like to get all the arsenic, but we respect homeowner decisions regarding their private property," said Dan Noble, project manager for USACE.

Noble said that procedures exist that would allow the Army to ask the Department of Justice to exercise eminent domain and compel owners to allow the work to occur, but such actions are usually only taken when a clear threat to public health exists.

The Spring Valley partners — U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region III, and D.C. Department of the Environment — have not yet determined that to be the case.

USACE plans to send final letters to these property owners offering to perform the work. If turned down a second time, Army policy for Formerly Used Defense Sites such as Spring Valley calls for administratively separating these properties from the current project and establishing a new project that would be undertaken at some point in the future.

"It basically allows us to complete the Spring Valley project and wrap things up, but at the same time, we are not forgetting about work that we were not allowed to accomplish," explained Noble.

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US Army Corps of Engineers Spring Valley Project

Community Meeting Announcement

You are invited to attend a joint Restoration Advisory Board & community meeting on **Tuesday, March 10, 2009,** at **7 p.m.,** at the Horace Mann Elementary School Community Meeting Room 4430 Newark St., NW

The presentation and discussion will detail the May 2009 planned destruction of chemical munitions recovered during the Pit 3 area investigation on Glenbrook Rd.

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The March Restoration Advisory Board meeting will be held in conjunction with this community meeting. The RAB needs interested Spring Valley residents to volunteer and provide community oversight on the USACE project activities at 10 meetings annually. To learn more about volunteering, please call or e-mail: Malcolm Pritzker, RAB membership chair, at **202-537-9595** or **malpritz@aol.com**.

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For more information about the upcoming meeting, please call Carrie Johnston or Maya Courtney of the Spring Valley community outreach team at **410-962-0157**.